

**DRAFT OF AGENCY-SPECIFIC TEMPLATE
FOR REPORT TO CONGRESS UNDER P.L. 106-107, 6/09/04**

**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)
REPORT TO CONGRESS UNDER P.L. 106-107**

Participation in the Government-wide Streamlining and Grants.gov Efforts

The Environmental Protection Agency has proudly and actively participated from the beginning in the P.L. 106-107 effort to provide citizens easy access to federal grant opportunities. The EPA liaison for Grants.gov initiatives is a full-time staff person who works in the Policy, Information and Training Branch of the Office of Grants and Debarment. EPA has at least one representative on each of the following workgroups/teams: Interagency Electronics Grants Committee; 106-107 Preaward Mandatory; 106-107 Preaward Discretionary; Electronic Standards Workgroup; Research and Related Subcommittee; Federal Demonstration Partnership, and PL 106-107 Single Audits.

EPA committed one staff person to 75% workload solely to the Grants Management Line of Business (GM LoB) initiative as a member of the Task Force. Additionally, EPA committed one person to the Drafting Group and one person to the Vetting Group, preparing business rules associated with the GM LoB.

EPA's active participation in these groups has assisted in the definition of standard data elements, the simplification of forms, and the creation of a Research and Related application package. EPA has worked to implement the two key electronic portals that announce grant opportunities and provide electronic grant application packages to the public using Grants.gov. EPA regularly attends the monthly Grants.gov Stakeholder Meeting.

The Director, Office of Grants and Debarment, is a member of The Grants Executive Board, consisting of representatives from grant-making agencies. This Board exercises oversight of the Grants.gov initiative's strategy and timetables, ensures agency consensus, provides executive sponsorship for Grants.gov outcomes in agencies, and resolves interagency issues. The Board also oversees implementation of P.L. 106-107, Federal Financial Assistance Management Improvement Act of 1999, which calls for the streamlining and simplification of the Federal grants processes.

**DRAFT OF AGENCY-SPECIFIC TEMPLATE
FOR REPORT TO CONGRESS UNDER P.L. 106-107, 6/09/04**

Internal Efforts to Create an Environment Conducive to Grants Streamlining and Simplification and Assess Impact of Changes

General Approach

EPA's E-Gov Workgroup meets quarterly to discuss E-Gov initiatives such as Grants.gov. This group is an oversight group of senior managers tracking progress in implementing E-Gov activities. Internal grants policies are circulated to the interested communities within EPA and reviewed to determine consistency with streamlining efforts. For example, the grants management community continues to focus on improving competition in the awarding of grants and enhancing compliance review and monitoring of grants.

The EPA Administrator and the Assistant Administrator for Administration and Resources Management continue to follow and enhance the "Grants Management Plan", issued in April 2003. The plan, which was circulated to States, Tribes, and OMB, contains five goals that relate to improving efficiency, effectiveness and accountability in grants management at EPA. One of the primary goals of the strategic plan is automation and IT implementation. In addition, the Deputy Administrator of EPA has sent several memoranda to EPA's senior managers to reinforce accountability and create an environment conducive to implementing improvements in Grants management.

EPA is working to strengthen the infrastructure and framework for communication, participation, and training within the agency. Outreach to internal and external constituencies is provided through the internet, training, conferences, and other forums. A full-time staff person in the Office of the Director in the Grants Administration Division of EPA's Office of Grants and Debarment (OGD) maintains the intranet and internet pages which are used to provide current information on grants management policies, OMB notices, and electronic grants issues. A national Grants Customer Relations Council, which is comprised of program and grants staff and managers, convenes each month to discuss current and pending matters in grants management (e.g., audit issues, new requirements, etc.) The Director, Grants Administration Division, or Chief, Policy, Information and Training Branch within OGD, chairs each meeting.

Training has been and will continue to be provided to EPA recipients as well as to EPA project officers, grants staff and senior management. The Grants.gov initiative is an important part of all training and citizen outreach efforts. An on-line training program for managers, and supervisors in grants management, is in the process of gathering requirements for implementation and will include Grants.gov information.

**DRAFT OF AGENCY-SPECIFIC TEMPLATE
FOR REPORT TO CONGRESS UNDER P.L. 106-107, 6/09/04**

Implementing the Recent Changes Affecting the Pre-Award Process

A. Grants.govFIND:

EPA has required, as part of the Agency Competition Policy and guidance that synopses for EPA competitive grant opportunities be posted to Grants.govFIND. This Agency requirement was reinforced in October 2003 with the OFFM Policy Letter. Synopses of competitive grant opportunities are currently posted in Fedgrants.gov as part of Grants.govFIND.

B. Announcement Template

In November 2003, EPA's Grants Competition Advocate circulated the final template to members of EPA's Grants Customer Relations Council. At the same time he issued guidance on the use of the template, and required compliance with the template. Implementation guidance developed by the Grants Competition Advocate is posted to EPA's competition intranet page to ensure the widest possible dissemination within EPA. Approximately 80% of the funding opportunity announcements are using the template, and it is expected that 100% will use the template by next year. Synopses of competitive announcements are posted by the Grants Competition office and a continuous monitoring of the template's use is on-going and guidance to offices that have not adopted the template is provided. The Office of Grants and Debarment is currently preparing requirements for a database to store and report on solicitations linking them to the Grant Award System and streamlining the internal process of issuing announcements.

C. The Grants.gov Portal for Electronic Applications

EPA has begun development of an interface with Grants.govAPPLY. EPA has completed System to System testing with Grants.gov and is configuring our Web Services to begin receipt of electronic applications from Grants.gov through Web Services and EPA's Central Data Exchange. EPA is in fact the first agency to bind to the Grants.gov WSDL. Internally EPA continues to make modifications to the Integrated Grants Management System (IGMS) to accept and act on electronic applications from Grants.gov. Final requirements are in place to implement a 'Staging database' to collect electronic applications and manage them before migration to IGMS for award preparation.

EPA has submitted a "ramp up" schedule to Grants.govAPPLY and anticipates six programs available for application through Grants.gov during FY 2005. One program was available during FY 2004 and proceeded successfully, collecting 30% of the total applications electronically through Grants.gov. The Office of Grants has communicated all new requirements, especially DUNS and Central Contractor Registration, to the national Grants Customer Relations Council and reinforced communication with memos, fact sheets, and policy directives. Additionally, EPA has instituted a Grants Management Council to interact with management level Grants staff and ensure that management is aware of Grants.gov issues. The prospect of increasing EPA's electronic awareness and adoption of Grants.gov electronic application is challenging. The technical barriers are manageable, it is the human barriers that demand a greater focus.

**DRAFT OF AGENCY-SPECIFIC TEMPLATE
FOR REPORT TO CONGRESS UNDER P.L. 106-107, 6/09/04**

III. Other